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Attitudes to Writing and Writing Behavior

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The paper describes a study carried out with university English majors to gain an insight into students' attitudes to writing and into their writing behavior, and to provide a starting point for developing a writing curriculum. A questionnaire was designed to elicit data from a sample comprising over 200 students. In addition, interviews were carried out with a subsample (N=30) and their written work was continually assessed over a period of three months. The findings suggest that students overall consider their writing skills lacking in many aspects and would find a college course that would help them develop and perfect academic writing very helpful. Although the participants were quite proficient in English, most found writing in English a very daunting task which required dealing with the cognitively complex process of writing and at the same time focusing on articulating meaning in a linguistically acceptable form. The data shows that students can, to some degree, identify problems they have in writing but they are not prepared to deal with them. A well-thought out curriculum which approached writing as a recursive process and was based on a student-centered pedagogy would create a more fruitful writing environment and raise students' motivation, thus facilitating the development of a very important and possibly the most complex skill not only in L2 but in L1 as well.

1.1 Introduction

The importance of good academic writing skills can not be overemphasized in today's world. This has been reflected by a great deal of interest that has been generated in academic writing both in the first (L1) and the second language (L2). University departments everywhere in the world are developing writing curricula and offering courses in which students develop academic writing proficiency. The publication of the first European anthology in English on teaching academic writing (Bjork/ Brauer/Reinecher/Jorgensen 2003) also reflects this interest. The book is an enquiry into what and how students in higher education in Europe should be taught writing. In the introduction the American scholar and educator





David R. Russel sums up the attitudes that prevailed for long on this side of the Atlantic:

“...writing is too often assumed to be a single easy – generalizable set of skills learned once and for all, usually at an early age – like riding a bicycle.”

(Russel 2003: vi)

The fact that European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing (EATAW) was formally founded in 2007 to facilitate scholarly exchange is further evidence of the growing interest in the study of academic writing. The association organizes annual conferences which draw together writing scholars from Europe and all parts of the world.

1.2 Research on L1 writing

Extensive research on writing in L1 in the last thirty years has established the field as a scholarly discipline. For a long time teaching writing was product oriented and did not concern itself with anything but the result. As more studies were done on how students write, researchers found increasing evidence that the composing process itself was crucial and determined the quality of the written product. In the 1980's already the focus shifted from the written product to the writing process. Writing was seen as a linear process in which writers go through a number of stages: the prewriting, drafting and revising stage. Later researchers opposed the linear approach (Hayes/Flower 1981; Perl 1980). Perl pointed out the recursive nature of the process explaining that writers go through continual revisions and that they do not simply move forward in a straight line but go constantly back and forth. Further research brought to the fore the cognitive and metacognitive aspects of the process (Flower/Hayes 1980; 1981). It was recognized that writing was a complex process which involved not only the development of language skills but that complex cognitive and metacognitive processes, cultural factors, the writing environment and motivational and other affective factors influence this process in important ways. Thus, focusing on various aspects of grammar, syntax and vocabulary use alone, as L2 teachers invariably did, was not going to significantly improve students' writing skills. The more we turn students' attention to formal linguistic correctness the more difficulty they have in expressing meaning (Krashen 1984). Emig (1971) maintains that as we write, we explore our thoughts and create meaning. Writing requires that we interpret experiences and process information. She sees writing as a process of discovery: we discover and shape what we want to say as we write. Based on a case study approach, Perl (1980) concluded that even unskilled writers used various writing strategies to discover meaning. Hayes and Flower (1980) developed a cognitive process theory of writing believing that it better reflects the nature of the composing process than the linear stage model. The cognitive-learning theory which was applied in other areas of education provided the theoretical framework





for teaching of academic writing. Understanding the students' thought processes as they engage in the writing process became crucial. Flower and Hayes (1980) suggest that the writing task requires students to go through a number of mental operations. They distinguish three stages of this cognitive process. First students are involved in planning what they will write, in other words generating ideas. The second stage is translating ideas into text. In the third stage, which they call reviewing, students revise and edit in order to improve what they have written. Chamot and O'Malley (1990), on the other hand, emphasize the importance of making students aware of the learning process, in other words teaching students how to learn by using a metacognitive approach. Putting emphasis on how students learn is making us recognize the importance of teaching students how to learn (Chamot/O'Malley 1990) and to reflect on their learning processes. The idea of teaching learners how to learn became central in this approach. Its implications for teaching writing pedagogies underscore the importance of raising students' awareness of the learning process through the metacognitive approach, on the one hand, and fostering the development of students' academic writing strategies, on the other.

1.3 Research on L2 writing

Until the last two decades much of the practice in L2 was informed by research carried out in L1. As Matsumoto (1995: 25) points out, if writing is intrinsically influenced by non-linguistic, cognitive-strategic and metacognitive processes, then there is "something fundamentally common to any act of writing regardless of the language." Matsumoto's findings led him to conclude that proficient L2 writers used the same strategies in L2 as in L1. Berman (1994: 30) concurs that "writers' thoughts are not tied to a particular language but are transferable across languages." Since research on L2 academic writing intensified, however, earlier inferences made about L2 writing suggesting that writers transfer writing knowledge and strategies from L1 to L2 have been questioned by some researchers. They claim that there are important differences in the writing processes of L2 writers compared with those of L1 writers (Silva 1993).

As far as L2 writing is concerned, teachers used to view it more as an activity in which students practiced their language skills. As Zamel says:

"For example mechanical errors might be pinpointed at the same time that students are being asked to elaborate on an idea or make it more interesting. Students who receive mixed messages of this kind may be confused because they have no way of knowing whether to focus on the meaning-level changes [...]" (1985: 82).

Looking at how students process information and express meaning was secondary. L2 teachers focused on correct grammar and usage, lexicosemantic





and morphosyntactic features of the language. They viewed writing largely in the context of the students' language skills. Consequently, in the process of revising students paid little attention to the ideas and meaning that they were trying to communicate and were concerned only about the lexicogrammatical aspects of their texts. Karpels (1990), however, believes that L2 writers' lack of writing competence is not caused so much by their language problems but rather by lack of competence in writing strategies.

Silva (1993) carried out an extensive empirical study to evaluate existing research on differences between writing in L1 and L2. This interesting study involved English as L2 (as many as 27 different first languages were represented) and native-English-speaking undergraduate students in the US. All the L2 students had a very high level of proficiency in the English language. Silva reports that the research findings point to numerous differences in the writing practices of L2 and native-English-speaking writers. The differences concerned the writing process as well as the differences in the written product. Silva found that L2 writers had more difficulty generating material as well as organizing the generated material. He reports that they did not have the same problem in L1. We find this puzzling since the skills and strategies that operate here are not really language related but involve complex cognitive and metacognitive processes. The study showed that L2 writing was stylistically different and simpler in structure. Beare's 2000 study of native English speakers and native Spanish speakers in Canada, who were proficient in their respective L2, confirmed the knowledge-transforming model. Beare concludes that "(w)ith high proficiency in L2, the learners may transfer their writing strategies as evident in this study. But for students of lower proficiency levels, the teachers may need to help them with their second language writing skills [...]" (Beare 2000: 4).

2 The study

2.1 *Aims of the study*

The study had two sets of aims. First, we wanted to find out about English majors' attitudes to writing, their prior experience, self-perception, needs with regard to academic writing and their actual writing behavior. Second, we wanted to provide a research-informed basis for an academic writing course curriculum.

2.2 *Sample*

The sample included 208 English majors studying at a Croatian university. The participants were in their third (undergraduate students) or fourth year of study (graduate students). Students in higher years of study were chosen to





ensure good language proficiency. Also, by that point they had already had some experience in academic writing which they could reflect on.

A subsample of 30 students was selected for a more intensive study that involved observation of writing behavior of English majors.

2.3 Instruments

A questionnaire comprising two parts was used in the study (see Appendix). The first part consisted of 23 items: 15 were yes/no questions and there were 8 open-ended questions. The questions elicited data on students' previous writing experience, current writing behavior, attitudes to writing, self-concept as writers and motivation for writing. Part two included 12 items with four-point rating scales (1= not at all; 4= a great deal), which elicited responses concerning students' perceptions of aspects of their writing that they felt they needed to improve in.

Three drafts of an essay written by the subsample were used as a source of information about English majors' writing behavior.

2.4 Procedure

The questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the semester. It took the participants approximately 15 minutes to complete.

The subsample of 30 English majors was followed for a period of time over which they wrote three essay drafts. The task was conceived as process writing in the course of which the students wrote multiple drafts. After writing the first draft, they were asked to read it critically and revise it by themselves. They received feedback from their instructor on their second draft. They were again asked to revise their essay. The investigator compared all three versions in order to analyze the students' writing behavior.

2.5 Results and discussion

Statistical and content analyses¹ of the data related to Part one of the questionnaire

provided quantitative and qualitative results on students' previous writing experience, perception of current writing behavior, attitudes to writing, self-concept and motivation.

Analysis of the three drafts written by each of the 30 participants who made up the subsample provided qualitative data about how students actually write. Invaluable insights were also gained by talking to students about their essays.

¹ The author would like to thank Ana Kukec and Nataša Pavičević for their assistance with data processing.





2.5.1 Previous writing experience

A vast majority of the participants had had some experience in academic writing, as shown in Figure 1 below.

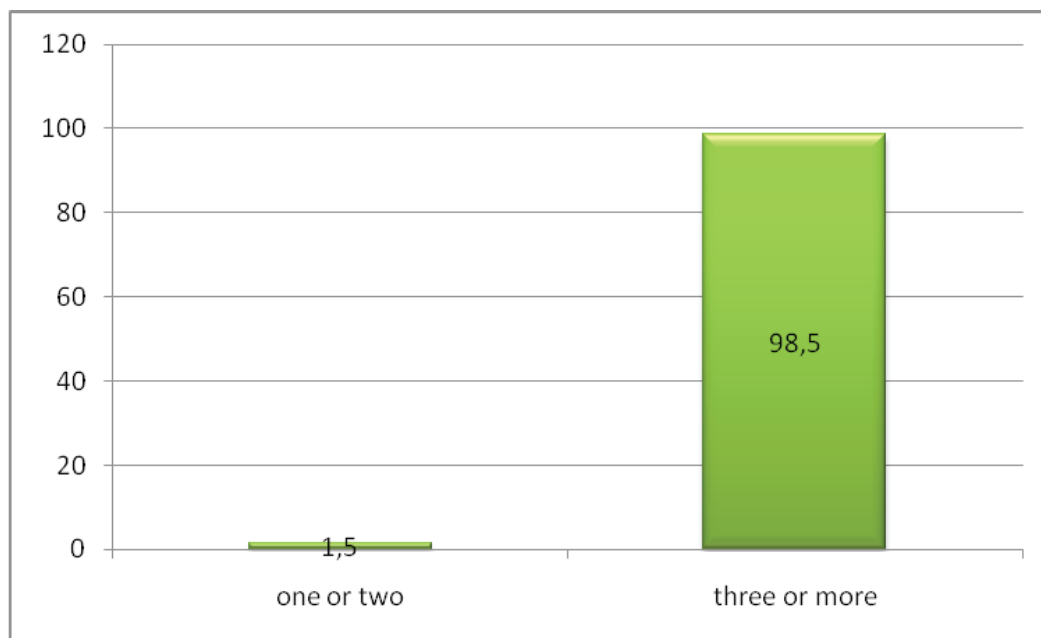


Figure 1: *Frequency (%) of writing essays*

However, nearly half of them reported that they had had no former instruction in writing at the university level (see Figure 2). The majority (87.7 per cent) said that they wished they had, while a little over 10 per cent did not regret not having writing instruction. Below are some student responses concerning how helpful they found the instruction.

Q 2. Have you had formal instruction in writing? If the answer is yes, was it helpful? Explain.

Learned to format essays properly: how to quote and deal with literature

To organize and reflect on my thoughts

Learned about different text types and styles

How to structure essay

Not really

Recognizing what is important/ what to focus on

Finding relevant sources



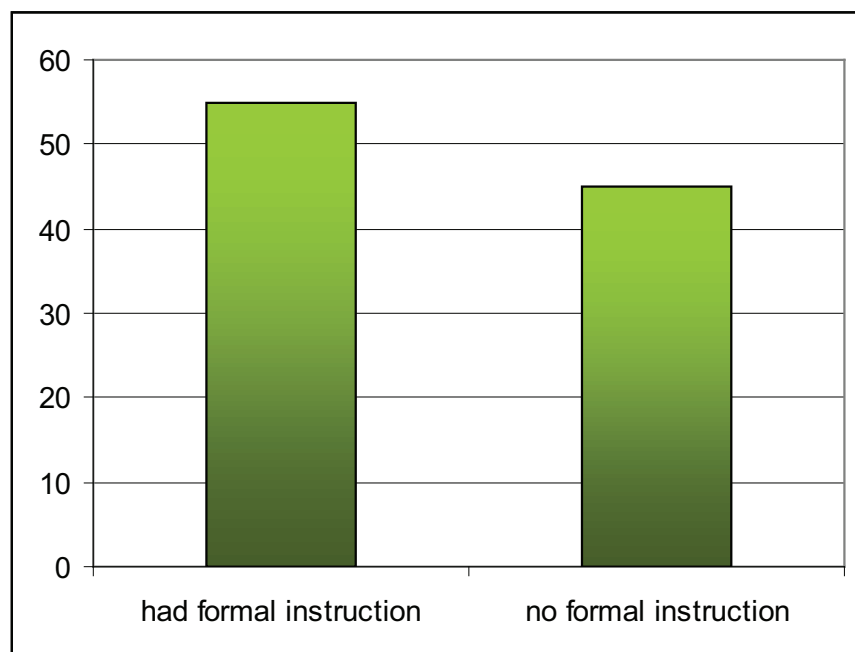


Figure 2: *Frequency (%) of replies to the question about previous formal instruction in writing skills*

When asked what else helped them develop writing skills (Q3) students mentioned a variety of learning experiences which, they believed, directly or indirectly helped them develop writing skills. Still, there are a good number of students who seemed to view writing skills in isolation and even failed to recognize the importance of the reading - writing connection.

Q3. Was there anything else that helped you to learn to write?

Reading a lot

Simply doing it (practice and experience)

Examples of other students' essays

No

Internet pages on how to write

It can be noticed that the participants relied on both direct and indirect ways of learning how to write.

Concerning best advice on writing that they had been given (Q4), the participants reported the the following:





Q4. What was the best advice you have been given on writing?

Just write whatever comes to your mind and organize it later.

Stick to the subject, do the necessary research, and be clear.

The more you write the easier it gets.

Learn from reading others' essays.

Have a focus while writing. It's not necessary to mention everything there is.

As these illustrative replies show, the participants valued simple and practical advice most.

2.5.2 Attitudes and motivation

Data on the participants' attitudes and motivation (see Figure 3) was elicited by means of Questions 7 & 8. An overwhelming majority of the participants (97.4 per cent) considered writing to be an important skill. Most believed that good writing skills could help them in their future professional life. However, they mostly saw writing skills as being relevant for professional writers and not very relevant in other careers. It would appear from the data and analyses of the writing of the 30 subsample students that even English majors do not place sufficient value on writing proficiency; we believe that this could be culturally determined since Croatian culture and education have not impressed upon students the social importance of good written communication.

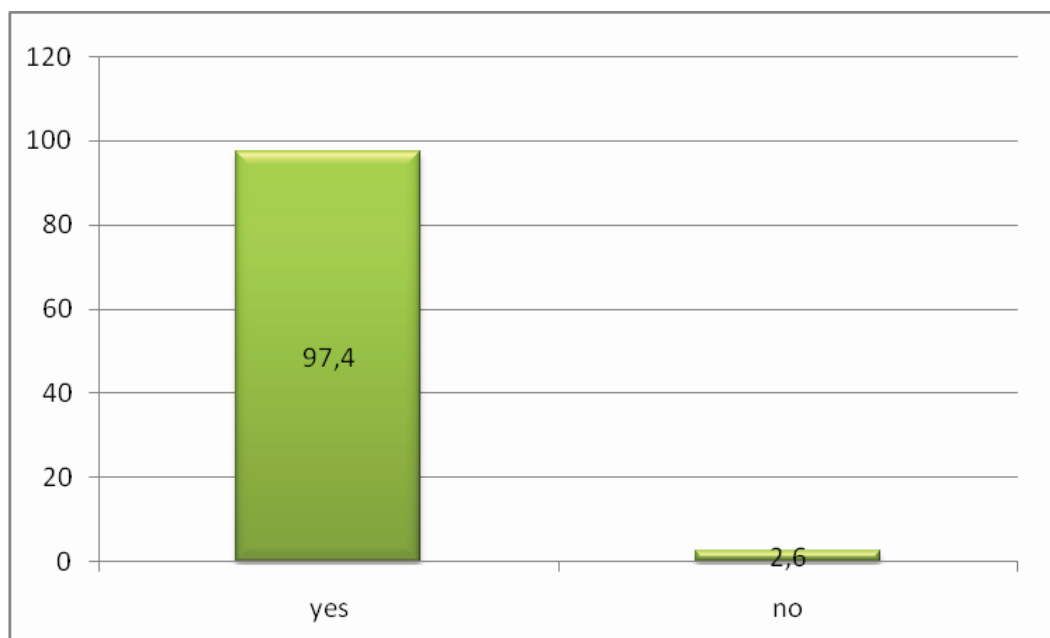


Figure 3: **Frequency (%) of replies to the question:** *Do you consider writing to be an important skill?*





Despite being English majors, approximately one third of the participants did not enjoy writing (see Figure 4). Even some of those who enjoyed it reported that it depended on the topic: they were put off by topics they did not find interesting. Some found it too demanding and time consuming. It is clear from their answers that students had strong feelings about writing, both positive and negative. One student phrased his positive reply in the following way: *"Yes, I am a weirdo."*, suggesting that nobody in their right mind could like writing. Another student found it very rewarding: *"I do enjoy when I'm near finishing it and when I'm satisfied with what I've written, I find it hard to start and usually postpone it for too long."* For some students *"(it) is liberating."* One said: *"It's a physical manifestation of my thoughts, feelings[...] which makes them more real."* Writing is frequently regarded by students as something they either love or hate. Consult Table 1 for a selection of positive and negative feelings the participants expressed about writing.

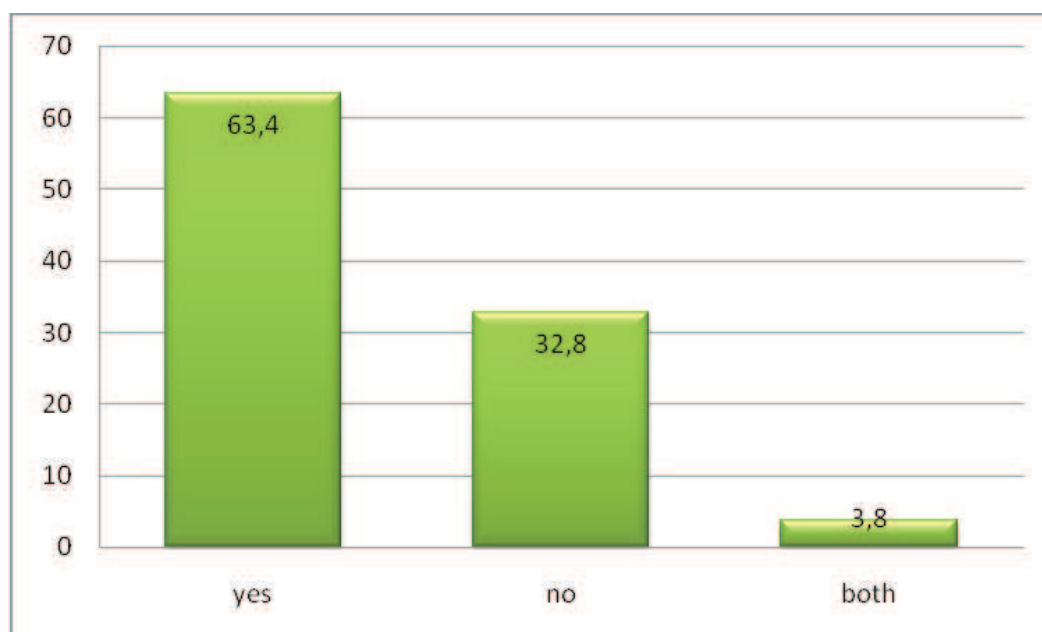


Figure 4: Frequency (%) of replies to the question: *Do you enjoy writing?*





Table 1: *Participants' reactions to writing*

Positive attitudes to writing	Negative attitudes to writing
The process of learning something and then structuring that knowledge and my opinion is the most stimulating part.	(...) I'd rather be doing something else.
There is always a sense of achieved progress.	Because usually I have to write about things I don't find interesting.
Because it's a journey.	Because I'm not good at it.
It's easier to put things into a perspective through writing	I have trouble expressing my thoughts; it takes too long, and too much energy.
I like the research part.	The topics often seem forced.
I enjoy it only when I'm writing about something that interests me.	It's hard for me to arrange my thoughts and construct a text.
It makes for a good exercise in grammar and vocabulary.	Most of the time ideas escape me.
Through writing I usually come up with new ideas.	I'm terrible at it, I have no imagination.
I can express my creativity, and I often learn something new about the topic and about myself.	
I always panic in the beginning.... But usually it turns out well.	

It is very interesting to note that English majors can be this divided in their attitudes to writing. As with other types of language learners, writing appears to be the most difficult language skill for English majors too. What seems to transpire through their explanations is that the participants' attitudes are interrelated with their other individual learner differences, such as attributions and self-concept (e.g. *"I'm terrible at it, I have no imagination"*).

2.5.3 Self- concept

According to our findings, practically half of the participants considered themselves to be good at writing (Figure 5).



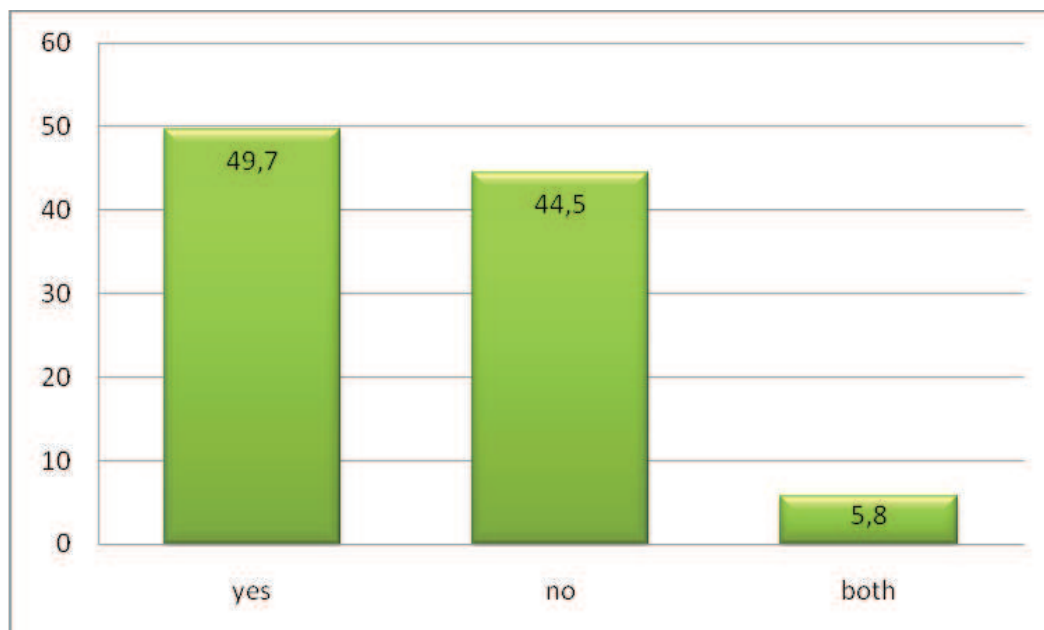


Figure 5: **Frequency (%) of replies to the question:** *Do you think you are a good writer?*

When asked whether they were a better writer in L1 or L2, almost 60 per cent believed that they could write better in their mother tongue than in English, whereas 25 per cent believed that they could write better in English (Figure 6).

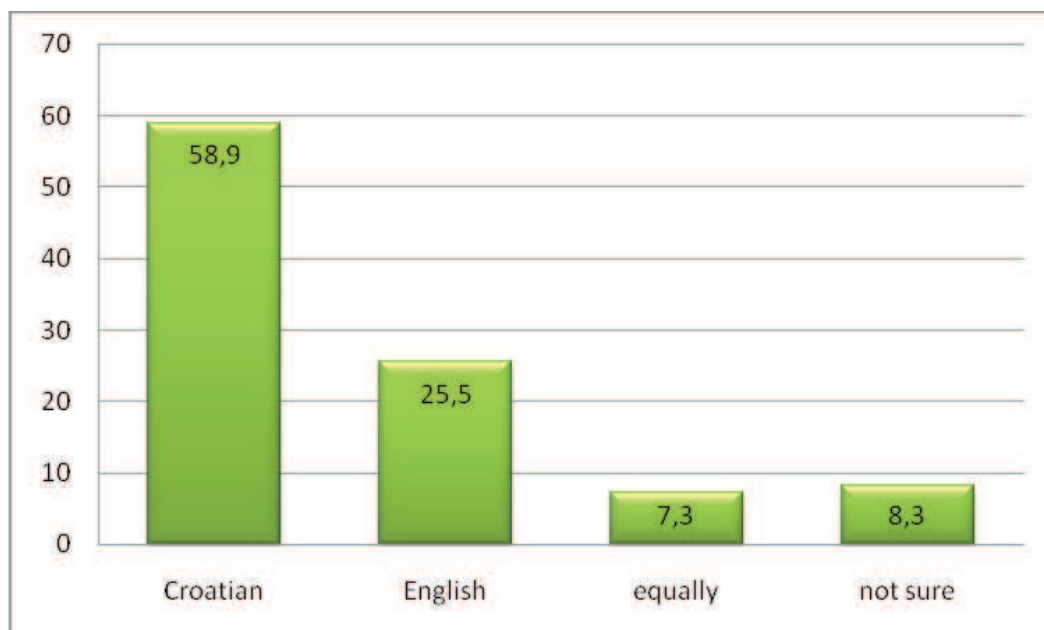


Figure 6: **Frequency (%) of replies to the question:** *Are you a better writer in your mother tongue or in English?*





Both successful and unsuccessful students readily pointed out their strenghts and weaknesses. These are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2: *English majors' strengths and weaknesses*

Strengths	Weaknesses
<i>Know how to organize my thoughts and ideas</i>	<i>I have a problem expressing my self</i>
<i>Do extensive preparation, drafting</i>	<i>It takes me ages to write an essay</i>
<i>Know how to use good sources</i>	<i>I do not explain things well/ divert from the subject</i>
<i>I have good grammar and spelling</i>	<i>I do it last minute</i>
<i>I can organize my writing in a logical way</i>	<i>I find myself composing awkward sentences</i>
<i>There is room for improvement</i>	<i>My style is awful</i>
	<i>Cannot connect paragraphs</i>

that factors in favor of Croatian were that they could express themselves better, were more fluent, found it easier to use complex structures, had a greater vocabulary and were more confidant as far as grammar is concerned. One participant expressed the following belief: Analyzing why participants believed that they were better in Croatian or English, it is clear "You can only express yourself precisely in your mother tounge". Clearly students writing in English as L2 are constantly having to juggle producing formally correct English texts and expressing meaning.

The one third that reported being better in English said it was because they got more practice in it than in their mother tounge and did most of their reading in English. The small number who believed that they were equally good in both languages claimed that they employed the same writing strategies. Writing is a complex skill to deal with in L1 too. It seems to us that some learners of English as L2 feel they are better in L2 writing than in L1 writing because they may have been trained more efficiently. In Croatian schools writing skills are mostly taught following the product oriented approach. At the university level, approaches to teaching writing tend to be more process oriented and with some English majors this results in higher writing achievement and self-confidence.

2.5.4 Perception of current writing behavior

As far as the participants' perception of current writing behavior is concerned, the majority of the participants (96.4 per cent) reported that they planned the structure of their essay, writing a draft was reported by 68.4 per cent, while a very small number (1.5 per cent) claimed that they never revised what they wrote.

When asked which aspects of their writing they revised our data (see Figure 7) shows that the participants were most concerned with grammar and sentence structure, followed by organization, content, and then vocabulary. Only about a quarter of the participants made revisions related to style.



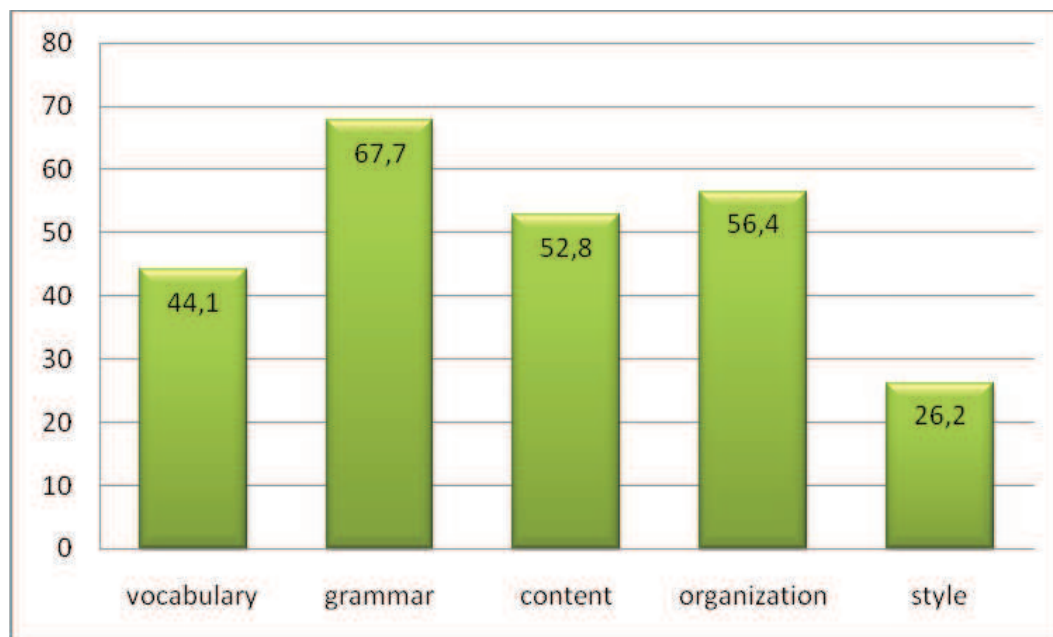


Figure 7: *Aspects participants claimed they revised (%)*

2.5.5 Findings on writing behavior during the writing of an essay

What students reported regarding aspects of their writing that they revised is not borne out by findings of our longitudinal study of the writing process carried out with a subsample of 30 students. They were enrolled in an academic writing course and were followed during three months while working on an essay. Analyses of their writing, two drafts and a final version of the essay, show that they rarely revised the content. When the drafts and the final version of the 30 students' essays were compared it was observed that the revisions were very superficial and one could hardly notice the difference between the versions. Only 4 out of 30 students made any revisions regarding the content of their essay even when they obtained feedback from the instructor, whereas in the questionnaire more than half of the participants reported revising content (see Figure 7 above).

The same is true of the organization of the essay, which according to the questionnaire data had a high priority for the students when they revised. The analysis of the essays showed that students revised mostly lexicogramatical aspects of their text. They also rarely made changes on the morphosyntactic level. This supports Silva's (1993) finding that L2 writers' behavior when it comes to revising is different from L1 writers'. The study of 30 students shows that English majors, though highly proficient, had not sufficiently developed critical reading skills and generally could not identify problems in their own texts. As a result they changed little when they revised so that the differences between the drafts were insignificant and most of the time they did not improve their text. And although, as pointed out by Cumming (1989), students produce better texts as they become





more proficient in L2, our study of the writing behavior of the 30 students, which is also confirmed by an earlier study of Croatian English majors (Beli / Mihaljević Djigunovic 2000/2001), showed that proficient students can have serious problems in generating and organizing ideas. That may be accounted for by the fact that they are not transferring L1 writing skills to L2 because they had never sufficiently mastered them in L1. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that when explicitly asked about a certain aspect of writing students recognized its importance but could not identify problems and make improvements because they had not developed critical reading skills and the necessary strategies to do this. Most students, when left to their own resources, do not know how to go about revising and rarely improve their work. Such findings are supported not only by Silva but also by studies of Faigley and Witte (1981). Furthermore, the observation of the writing behavior of the 30 participants showed that the students who put more effort in the planning stage, i.e. generating ideas and probing the subject, wrote significantly better essays. Proficient students who spent little time on thinking about their topic wrote essays that were threadbare and unengaging, though linguistically and formally acceptable. Generally, it was observed that the participants whose writing behavior was closely monitored did not spend sufficient time on generating ideas and getting a good grip on the topic and moved too quickly to the drafting stage. The process of conceptualizing and thinking ideas through seemed to be the most difficult part of the composing process for them.

Some researchers have also questioned how well students understand instructors' feedback and the extent to which it helps them revise (Cohen/Cavalcanti 1990). Observation of our subsample revealed that frequently students did not read the feedback carefully or that as a rule they found it rather abstract and could not improve their essays in the areas suggested by the instructor unless the problem involved an obvious grammatical error. However, when feedback was followed up by talkback, in other words, a discussion with the student of the strengths and the weaknesses of the essay, the students were more successful in dealing with revision and their essays after revising were markedly improved.

Further interesting insights were gained concerning students' attitudes to feedback. It could be observed that the participants took their writing very personally and were very quite to the instructor's comments. Students' reactions varied. Some responded well and concentrated their efforts on improving the essay, others took it very personally and even insisted that they had done their best and there was absolutely no room for improvement. We feel that it is highly important to encourage exchange of ideas and impress upon students the importance of keeping an open mind. Radecki and Swales (1988) have coined very apt terms for these two different groups of students calling them 'Receptors' and 'Resistors'. In our study the Receptors welcomed the instructor's comments and showed readiness to act upon them. The Resistors, on the other hand, seemed to interpret them as a kind of misunderstanding between themselves





and the instructor. In between were the Semiresistors, those students who also took an attitude that was not cooperative and who did not show readiness to invest more effort into improving their writing, taking the stance that they do not really understand why they should change anything. Such emotional factors can affect the student's development in writing and present an issue that needs to be resolved by the instructor. A number of students took the view that instructors' comments on writing were personal and subjective, unless they concerned obvious grammatical or lexical problems. For this reason students should become acquainted with the rhetorical tradition in which they are writing and the dominant discourse modes, as well as the important culturally determined differences between the rhetorical tradition of L2 and L1 in order to understand that writing belongs to an academic discipline governed by norms and conventions that go back to Antiquity.

2.5.6 Conclusion

The data gathered by the questionnaire as well as that collected in the longitudinal study of writing of 30 students provided some useful insights into English majors' attitudes towards writing and their writing behaviors. The study showed that only a little over half of the English majors until their third year of study had had any formal instruction in writing, therefore they had been left to their own resources. This is a great pity because had they had, they would have mastered and perfected academic writing skills and would have been better prepared for the extensive writing that they have to do for their university courses. As far as English majors' self-concept is concerned, it is interesting to note that half of them considered themselves to be a good writer, while one third believed that they could even write better in English than in Croatian. It should be borne in mind, as the longitudinal study showed, that students' confidence is not always justified by their actual performance. What emerged in the study concerning motivation is that, although the majority of the participants believed that writing is an important skill, over a third did not enjoy it. Their explanation of their likes and dislikes reflects considerable individual differences among students. One of the most frequently cited reasons for not enjoying writing was lack of interest in the topic. A more student-centered curriculum and a more supportive writing environment could go a long way in raising students' motivation. A very valuable finding concerning students' writing behavior points to a discrepancy between how English majors perceived their writing behavior and what they really did. While the majority of the participants reported that during revision they paid attention to all aspects of the writing, especially organization and content, what they were observed doing was revising mostly at the lexicogrammatical level. Even these revisions were done rather superficially. Consequently their revised texts did not prove to be better versions of their drafts. The longitudinal study also brought to light students' very sensitive, even emotional reactions towards their written work. It also bears out the finding of other researchers that students are generally puzzled by teachers' feedback, pay little attention to it, and very rarely act upon it.





Valuable research in L2 writing in the past 20 years and issues that emerged in this study provide ample evidence that writing is a cognitively and linguistically complex process. Hence, it merits more effort being put into designing writing courses and developing writing curricula that would motivate students and provide the best environment in order to facilitate the development of one of the most difficult skills not only in L2 but L1 as well. The best environment implies that L2 students are, from the very beginning of their university studies, closely and systematically guided in acquiring academic writing skills.

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KAKO STUDENTI PIŠU I ŠTO MISLE O PISANJU

U prvom dijelu rada daje se pregled važnijih istraživanja koja se bave razvijanjem vještine pisanja te onih koja se bave razlikama u pisanju na materinskom jeziku (J1) i stranom jeziku (J2). U drugom dijelu opisuje se istraživanje provedeno na uzorku od 208 hrvatskih studenata engleskog jezika viših godina u kojem su se ispitali njihovi stavovi prema pisanju i sam postupak pisanja. U istraživanju je korišten upitnik kojim su prikupljeni relevantni kvantitativni i kvalitativni podaci. Iz glavnog uzorka izdvojen je poduzorak od 30 ispitanika koji je praćen za vrijeme pisanja eseja. Studentske percepcije o tome kako pišu uspoređuju se s njihovim stvarnim postupcima tijekom pisanja. Različite verzije njihovih eseja, prije i poslije komentara nastavnika, analizirane su i uspoređene. Nalazi ukazuju na raskorak između onoga što studenti govore da rade i onoga što doista rade kada pišu. Utvrđeno je da studenti rijetko ozbiljnije mijenjaju tekst kako bi ga poboljšali, u pravilu konačna verzija njihova teksta nije kvalitetnija od prvotne. Samo neznatan broj studenata proizveo je tekst koji je bio zamjetno bolji. U zaključku se, između ostalog, ističe potreba da se istraživački nalazi i nove spoznaje o vještini pisanja kao kognitivno i lingvistički vrlo složenoj jezičnoj djelatnosti primjene u razradi kurikuluma akademskog pisanja na stranom jeziku.

Key words: writing skill, attitudes to writing, self-concept, feedback, writing behavior

Ključne riječi: vještina pisanja, stavovi prema pisanju, pojam o sebi, povratna obavijest, postupci pisatelja tijekom pisanja





Appendix

Writing Questionnaire for the students of English in the Department of English Language and Literature

Date: _____

Program you are enrolled in _____

PART ONE

1. How many essays/ compositions, reports, and term papers have you written for your English courses so far?

a) none b) one or two d) three or more

2. Have you had formal instruction in writing? a) yes b) no

If the answer is yes, was it helpful? Explain in what way.

3. Was there anything else that helped you to learn to write? Explain.

4. What was the best advice you have been given about writing?

5. If you have not had formal instruction, do you wish you had?
a) yes b) no

6. Do you think you are a good writer? a) yes b) no





Explain your answer.

7. How do you write?

7.1 Do you look for information on the topic and plan the structure of your essay / paper a) yes b) no

7.2 Do you generally first write a draft? a) yes b) no

7.3 Do you revise what you have written? a) yes b) no

7.4 Underline which aspects you revise mostly:

vocabulary
grammar/sentence structure
content
organization
style

7.5 When you write, do you use dictionaries, grammar books, etc. a) yes b) no

7.6 Do you pay more attention to content or form? _____

7.7 Do you ever ask someone to read what you have written? a) yes b) no

8. Do you enjoy writing? a) yes b) no

Why? _____

9. Do you consider writing to be an important skill? a) yes b) no

Why? _____





10. Can good writing skills help one advance in a career? a) yes b) no

In what way? _____

11. Are you a better writer in your mother tongue or in English?

Explain. _____

PART TWO

**How much do you need to improve your writing in the following areas?
Circle the right number.**

1=not at all; **2** = a little; **3** = quite a bit; **4** = a great deal

Defining the topic and planning essay/report	1	2	3	4
Synthesizing facts/ideas	1	2	3	4
Expressing ideas in correct English	1	2	3	4
Linking sentences smoothly	1	2	3	4
Expressing ideas clearly and logically	1	2	3	4
Writing coherent paragraphs	1	2	3	4
Writing introductions	1	2	3	4
Writing body sections	1	2	3	4
Writing conclusions	1	2	3	4
Revising and proof-reading	1	2	3	4
Using appropriate style	1	2	3	4
Referring to sources	1	2	3	4

